

Sound and Precedent in Elizabethan Progress Entertainments

Abstract This chapter examines the way echo was used in progress entertainments staged for Queen Elizabeth, focusing in particular on the hospitality staged at Elvetham (1591) and Kenilworth (1575). Anderson demonstrates the patterns of repetition that can be traced through these events. In particular, the use of echo as a performance device at Kenilworth is repeated or referenced in several later entertainments, including Bisham (1592), and adapted into a musical device at Elvetham. This chapter explores the ways sounds, musical ensembles and musical genres heard at prior events are revisited, revised and re-heard in different locations and contexts, developing an acoustics of courtly entertainments in which the signs of musical sophistication are also political assertions.

Keywords Elizabeth I · Robert Dudley · Madrigal · Consort
Kenilworth · Elvetham

On the second day of her grand visit to Kenilworth in 1575, a Savage Man emerged from the wood to greet Elizabeth as she returned by torchlight from hunting. As a hermit with limited contact with the outside world, he declared himself ignorant of her identity, but (having noticed the visit's effect upon the landscape of the castle and grounds) anxious to discover who she is. Getting no answer from his audience, he appeals to Echo and in doing so instigates a question and answer echo

device, in which Echo inevitably confirms the final option put forward by the speaker by repeating it. For instance, the Savage describes the gifts that had been left out for the arriving guests the previous day and asks for their meaning. Echo responds with the name of Robert Dudley as patron, benefactor and animating force behind the entertainment:

Gifts? what? sent from the Gods?
 as presents from above?
 Or pleasures of provision,
 as tokens of true love
Eccho True love
 And who gave all those gifts?
 I pray thee (*Eccho*) say?
 Was it not he? who (but of late)
 this building here did lay?
Eccho *Dudley* (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 301)

One fictive option—the idea that the gifts magically appeared as expressions of divine approval of Elizabeth’s visit—is discarded in favour of emphasising the role of Dudley in providing and hosting. The gifts are not ‘presents from above’, but provisions deliberately set out to make a statement on behalf of the entertainment’s host.

Loewenstein (1984) identifies this echo as ‘an elaborate modesty topos’, in which the speaker can convey favourable information to the audience by appearing ignorant of it (73). By recalling the gift-giving and other welcoming events that had been staged the previous day, the Savage’s interrogation of Echo reiterates their splendours and restates their intended import. Echo is an appropriate medium for this kind of reminder and enables the entertainments and gifts already provided to count twice. Furthermore, the ingenuity with which the device achieves this double value is part of its own charm.

The entire sequence is an elaborate construction of artful ‘naturalness’ that simultaneously emphasises and disavows the care and skill with which the entertainment addressed the Queen. The ‘accidental’ nature of the meeting itself is obviously contrived, and the persona of the wild man is himself a stereotype who speaks in verse. An ivy-clad savage is the antithesis of courtly sophistication, but the more the Savage’s assertions are presented as transparent, truthful and above all natural, the more obvious becomes their carefully constructed nature. Such obvious constructedness does not undermine the entertainment, as Loewenstein

suggests though, rather, it enhances it. The introduction of Dudley as the provider of the entertainment operates precisely within ‘the social protocols of royal festivity’ which Loewenstein claims Gascoigne’s authorial intention ‘denies’ (Loewenstein 1984, 73). Invoking Dudley by his family name rather than the title is a feint which uses false humility to reinforce the social connections of the entertainment’s patron, displaying a sense of intimacy and familiarity between him and the Queen.

The entertainment also offers a meta-commentary on royal welcomes through drawing attention to its own status as a display which contains cryptic messages for observers to decipher. Its analysis of the previous day’s events and decoding of the gift-giving offers its audience a model of how to respond to its own gnomic statements. Thus, echo creates meaningfulness on its own behalf, as well as for events that have already taken place and even for those yet to come, since following Gascoigne’s use of it in 1575, Echo is explicitly featured as a character or device within several further notable examples. The closest parallel is its reappearance at the entertainment at Bisham in 1592, when Elizabeth was again greeted by a wild man. In a speech which seems to refer directly to the entertainments at Kenilworth in 1575, he gives an account of hearing magical music (represented, it seems, by the ‘Cornets sounding in the woods’ that were heard as Elizabeth approached (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 604)). Like Gascoigne’s Savage, the Wild Man asks desperately for an indication of who has caused this frightening and awesome noise, and, similarly, gets no answer from anyone but Echo. The difference is that the Bisham encounter with Echo takes place offstage, so to speak, and is conveyed in reported speech by the Wild Man in his address to the visiting party. He says ‘I, it may bee, more stout than wise, asked, who passed that way? what he or she? None durst answere, or would vouchsafe, but passionate Eccho, who said Shee’ (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 604). This version of Echo is itself an echo, repeating part of Gascoigne’s encounter with Echo seventeen years previously. Thus, the techniques, tropes and feints used at Kenilworth, including the echo device, can be heard rebounding through the later entertainments.

This chapter will explore the sounds and aural repetitions of progress entertainments across the later Elizabethan period, first by addressing the ways in which such musical and aural effects helped to structure progress visits and to articulate the aspirations of hospitality. It will then discuss how textual descriptions of music and dancing shape our understanding of the sounds heard at entertainments. Finally, the chapter will consider

music used at the Elvetham entertainments in 1591, showing that sounds at this event, including the echo device, were presented deliberately as both similar and different to precedent. The chapter will demonstrate that aural echoes formed an important element of the densely intertextual meanings of progress entertainments. Even though the sounds heard at these events are no longer audible, we can still identify some of the ways that they reflect, amplify, echo or even drown out each other.

WELCOMING THE QUEEN

Reflecting on the state of England in 1587, William Harrison gives a rationale for the Queen's summer peregrinations that directs our attention to three elements: the visual, the aural and the spatial.

But what shall I need to take upon me to repeat all, and tell what houses the queenes maiestie hath? sith all is hers, and when it pleaseth hir in the summer season to recreate hir selfe abroad, and view the estate of the countrie, and heare the complaints of hir poore commons injured by hir unjust officers or their substitutes, everie noble mans house is hir palace, where shee continueth during pleasure, and till shee returne againe to some of hir owne, in which she remaineth so long as pleaseth hir.

The court of England, which necessarilie is holden alwaies where the prince lieth, is in these daies one of the most renowned and magnificent courts that are to be found in Europe. For whether you regard the rich and infinit furniture of household, order of officers, or the interteinement of such strangers as dailie resort unto the same, you shall not find manie equall thereunto, much lesse one excelling it in anie maner of wise (Harrison 1587, bk. 3 Chap. 15).¹

In Harrison's view, the progresses enable the Queen to see and be seen (and thus 'view the estate of the countrie'), but they are also about listening: Elizabeth is supposedly able to 'heare the complaints' of those who would not usually have access to her. And through both visual and aural means, the space occupied by Elizabeth and her followers is transformed into a 'renowned and magnificent' court.

Harrison's assertion that 'all is hers' attests to the legal status of the monarch as a kind of feudal overlord and her theoretical power to assert that right over whatever space she chooses (Kolkovich 2016, 25). In practice, of course, this dominance is always contested and contextualised

by the space and circumstances in which it takes place. Even if ‘every nobleman’s house is her palace’, it is still a particular nobleman’s house. Furthermore, rather than a dyad of reciprocal gestures and responses between the Queen and the host, the visits featured the participation of complex overlapping networks of agents (including local people, visiting courtiers, household servants and performers).

In early modern codes of hospitality, the entertainment of guests externalised the host’s personal worth, by displaying both the resources at the host’s disposal and their courtly gentility in knowing how to deploy them (Heal 1990; Kolkovich 2016, Chap. 3). Entertaining Queen Elizabeth, however, was a special case as she was exceptional in terms of both status and gender and thus required exceptional kinds of hospitality (Cole 1999, 65). The progress entertainments were staged as acts of hospitality and projected a fantasy in which the host, their social standing and their relationship to the Queen and to contemporary political contexts were presented in an idealised alternative reality, one that echoed reality highly selectively.

The role of music and sound was not merely to enhance this alternative reality, but also in some senses to create it. This is in no small part bound up with music’s function as a structural marker. As is true for all of the performance genres discussed in this book, musical cues enabled transitions between different sections and marked beginnings, endings and other significant moments. In terms of a progress entertainment, this could be, for example, the Queen’s arrival or departure from an estate, the moment at which a device started or finished, or when some new element was to be introduced within the course of a dramatic piece. This kind of annunciatory music was familiar from the use of fanfares and ringing of bells to signal the approach of the sovereign in urban contexts, for example,² and such prior uses of music confer associated meaning when they are invoked in performance.

On Elizabeth’s arrival at Kenilworth in 1575, the usual ceremonial fanfare of the welcome was writ large, literally, by giant trumpeters. Gascoigne’s account makes clear how this worked:

Her Majesty passing on to the first gate, there stode in the Leades and Battlementes therof, sixe Trumpetters hugelie advaunced, much exceeding the common stature of men in this age, who had likewise huge and monstrous Trumpettes counterfetted, wherein they seemed to sound: and behind them were placed certaine Trumpetters who sounded in deede at her majesties entrie. (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 291)

Music operates here as both visual spectacle and sound. The real trumpeters provided the requisite fanfare for the Queen's approach, while the outsize models impressed onlookers further. Gascoigne goes on to explain that because men had been 'of that stature' in the time of King Arthur, the presence of giant trumpeters on the gate showed that Kenilworth was still maintained by '*Arthurs* heires and their servants' (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 292). Gascoigne's phrasing here is ambiguous. It could be understood to mean that Elizabeth and her immediate ancestors are the heirs of Arthur, with courtiers like Robert Dudley as their servants, but it could also imply that Dudley himself is one of the 'heirs', and his retinue, including the large number of people involved in the entertainment, are the servants. The heard music of the performance provides an appropriate welcome, signalling the Queen's presence, but the huge trumpeters draw the visual focus away from the presence that the sound supposedly highlights. Sound, vision and text act in counterpoint with each other to create a polysemic scenario, open to different levels of implication and interpretation.

Gascoigne's description of the spectacle as a 'dum shew' (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 291) directs us to a generic precedent for this kind of combined meaning. He obviously does not mean that it took place in silence; rather, the display is a specific mixture of music and tableau familiar from popular drama.³ In this sense, the phrase is oxymoronic, in that it lacks meaning (in the semantic sense because it is dumb) but conveys meaning (through showing the audience something). Thus, the descriptor refers to a particular hermeneutic, alerting the reader to the presence of symbolism that can now only be decoded from the textual description. The reporting of the sounds of welcome takes the opportunity to refine and shape their import, echoing the parts that Gascoigne wishes to emphasise.

At Bisham, Elizabeth was also welcomed by music on her entrance to the grounds of the estate, music whose meaning was glossed by her encounter with the Wild Man (see above). Before finally reaching the house, she also encountered a scene of musical mythology, involving Pan attempting to woo two virgins. Pan clearly represents worldly music here, declaring 'I cannot tickle the sheepes guts of a Lute, bydd, bydd, bydd, like the calling of Chickins, but for a Pipe that squeeketh like a Pigg, I am he' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 605). His attempts at courtship provided the virgins with cues for witty and wise replies, which flattered Elizabeth's unmarried status.⁴ Elizabeth's power over worldly music was

then displayed when Pan, promising to make her stay a pleasant one, stated ‘heare I breake my Pipe, which *Apollo* could never make me doe; and follow that sound which follows you’ (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 607). Elizabeth’s presence, so often figured as musical (Butler 2015, Chap. 1), is here transformed itself into an echo-originating model which inspires harmonious emulation.

The capitulation of Pan to feminine authority rewrites the myths of masculine dominance and revenge associated with him. In *Daphnis and Chloe*, as we saw in Chap. 1, Pan’s anger at Echo’s refusal of his overtures results in her punishment by dismemberment. At Bisham, Pan’s violent power is bathetically deflated by the unconcern of the two objects of his attention, and it is Pan’s phallic pipe that is broken apart, subjugating male-figured irrational bodily desires to rational female chastity. The final stage of this articulated welcome was a song from Ceres, who offered up her crown of wheat to Elizabeth, thus implying that the Queen represented a paradoxical combination of fecundity and virginity in this specifically feminised pastoral fantasy.⁵

Music also engineered a shift into a fantasy landscape at the Elvetham estate in 1591. Elizabeth was welcomed by a song performed by figures representing the Hours and the Graces who, the text explains, were ‘fained to be the guardians of heaven gates’. These figures led the way to the house, ‘strewing the way with flowers, and singing a sweet song of six parts’, and a Poet exhorted the nymphs to ‘*sing sweet triumphal songs, | Fill waies with flowers, and th’ayr with harmonie*’ (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 578–579). As Wilson points out, the entire routine suggests that Elizabeth’s presence has transformed Elvetham into paradise (Wilson 1980, 162n). This heavenly vision is completed by the music, as it effects the change of atmosphere and advent of pleasure that reifies the heavenly.

The lyrics sung by the Graces and the Hours describe the spontaneous reaction of nature to Elizabeth’s presence. This reaction is presented as a musical one in the third stanza, where it is proclaimed that

Now birdes record sweete harmonie,
and trees doe whistle melodie:
Now every thing that nature breedes,
doth decke it selfe in pleasant weedes.
O beauteous Queene [of second Troy,
Accept of our unfeined joy.] (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 579)

A magical energy enlivens all things as Elizabeth approaches. The invocation of birdsong, like echo, claims a natural phenomenon as evidence of divine sanction and proof of virtue (even if the sound is simulated). The song reverses the idea that music has invigorating powers, by positioning Elizabeth herself as the source of such energy and music as the vehicle of its expression. Furthermore, it enables evidence of this magical affect to be enacted as well as described, as the music really does fill the air during the song. After all, it is literally the case that Elizabeth's presence prompts music to be heard.

In contrast to the previous examples, the Cowdray entertainment created its effect by negating the expectation of music at the Queen's approach. Elizabeth arrived on the estate at about 8 p.m. on 14 August 1591, when 'upon sight of her Majestie, loud musicke sounded'. So far, so typical, but 'at her enteraunce on the bridge', the music 'suddenly ceased' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 552). This abrupt halt must have been an arresting departure from usual practice. An explanation was soon forthcoming, however. A Porter emerged to explain that '*the walles of Thebes were raised by Musicke: by musick these are kept from falling*'. This, the Porter goes on, is owing to a prophecy which foretold that the walls of the house would be unstable until '*the wisest, the fairest and most fortunate of all creatures, should by her first steppe make the foundation staid*' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 552).

The music here combines two potentially conflicting functions. First, the musical myth enables a compliment to be paid to Elizabeth similar to that at Elvetham. Her presence takes on the qualities attributed to music, endowing her with a royal charisma that encompasses the past, present and future, and is effected effortlessly by her mere presence, because it is part of her essential nature. Second, the fabled role of music in the legendary raising of the walls of Thebes helps to generate a kind of equivalence between the household and the prestigious myth of the musically generated city. Thus, at the very beginning of the Queen's stay, an oblique claim to the importance of the household is already being laid. Its immovability helps to discourage any idea of its vulnerability to anti-Catholic policy that might have threatened the Montague family (Heale 2007, 190n), yet that immovability is gracefully presented as entirely due to Elizabeth's benevolence. This skilfully asserts the family's resistance without appearing defensive.

The repeated use of music as a framing device in the entertainments helps to reinforce its associations with myth and magic, and to facilitate

the establishment of scene and location as outside the real world, within an alternative set of conventions and explanations. Like an echo, the music signals the need to decipher without committing fully to particular meanings, thus maintaining the flexibility and plausible deniability required in a volatile political and religious context. As at Kenilworth and elsewhere, music's associations with pleasure and with otherworldliness combine to mark out estates like Cowdray as places that have indeed been transformed into the court of England. This idealised fantasy simultaneously fulfilled the obligations of hospitality while providing entertainments with a discourse flexible enough to articulate the concerns of the real world. As Palmer puts it, the progress entertainment 'appropriates community life and submits it to narrative' which 'produces imaginary resolutions of real contradictions between class, economic, and political interests' (Palmer 1992, 126). Musical welcomes open up a space and time where meaning can be created through combining a variety of sounds, visions and words, and delicate effects that, like Echo, can be heard while hovering just out of view.

TEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS

These effects are couched in terms which invoke a recurrent vocabulary for depictions of Elizabeth that includes, for example, references to her exemplary virginity, tropes of courtly love and pastoral myth (Strong 1977; Bates 1992). Not only did the poetic mythology of the Elizabethan court enable these entertainments to create ingenious and entertaining worlds for themselves, it also provided the potential for a reimagining of social hierarchy in the figurative representations of the entertainment. As Suerbaum points out, 'eulogies in the mythological mode are unassailable, because they are patently "feigned"'. You can be as hyperbolic as you like without being guilty of untruth or absurdity' (Suerbaum 1994, 63). This feigning facilitated a flattering view of the host's place in the social order, a view which could be reflected back into reality by the printed text of the entertainment.

Descriptive texts thus reflect a shift in audience and purpose (Heaton 2010). For instance, at Elvetham, as at most big country houses, the host's hospitality was demonstrated by providing an abundance of food for the court and local residents. In the commemorative text, by contrast, this conventional act becomes subsumed into a declaration of false modesty. The narrator declares:

Were it not that I would not seem to flatter the honourable minded Earle: or, but that I feare to displease him, who rather desired to expres his loyall dutie in his liberall bountie, then to hear of it againe, I could heere willingly particulate the store of his cheare and provision. (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 580)

The event and text use different strategies to maximise the impression of the Earl as a good host. At the event, the host's relationship to his guests and tenants was a performance, figured by the objects themselves: the food and drink that constituted traditional hospitality. In the text, concealment replaces display as the more effective mode of self-promotion. We are left to imagine the abundance of 'cheare and provision', having been invited, through the text's implication, to supply these details ourselves.

This process of selective textual representation can help to smooth over inconsistencies within the entertainment's performance, or even blunders. For example, one of the accounts of the 1575 Kenilworth entertainment describes how Gascoigne, performing as the Savage Man, accidentally endangered the Queen by startling her horse (Kuini 1983, 46). The episode is not mentioned at all in *Princely Pleasures*, Gascoigne's 'official' description of the entertainment, and no wonder, as it was obviously embarrassing for all concerned. Thus, the text constitutes a more perfectly realised account of the entertainment than the performance, one in which the fantastic myth of the pageant world is never challenged. Later entertainments echo Gascoigne's idealised presentation of events, not the unfortunately flawed version, even if it is closer to 'reality'. As a genre, printed descriptions are therefore not so much about reporting 'what actually happened', as interpreting and creating a fantasy narrative of their own. The texts are in the midst of the echoic process of creating and modifying the mythologies they invoke and the events they describe, participating in them rather than being simply produced by them.

A case in point is the textual traces of events at Wanstead in 1578 whose evident selectivity in what they represent has given rise to much critical speculation over Sidney's motives and intentions as the writer of the vignette often referred to as *The Lady of May* (e.g. Berry 1989; Hagar 1990). In the entertainment, Elizabeth is called upon to resolve a conflict between two suitors for a Lady's hand. This is played out in a contest of music. Each competitor sings two verses of six lines each,

in which a debate is enacted about music's relationship to what it represents. The first of the rivals, Espilus, argues for a literal correspondence of sound and meaning in which a higher pitch represents higher intentions: 'Tune up, my voice, a higher note I yield: | To high conceits the song must needs be high' (Duncan-Jones 1989, lines 143–144). Therion's reply counters this exactly, asserting music's capacity to represent indirectly and obliquely by claiming that 'The highest note comes oft from basest mind, | As shallow brooks do yield the greatest sound' (lines 149–150). The episode recalls mythical musical competition, such as that between Apollo and Marsyas, an impression emphasised by a reference to Midas, whose ass's ears are invoked by a supporter of Therion as appropriate for listening to the opposing side's 'drivel' (line 182). Musical appreciation then is dependent upon the listener's ability to 'read' the meaning of the music, hearing beyond the surface factors of pitch and volume. Subtle listeners, it is implied, must co-operate sympathetically with the music's designs in order to understand its true import.

Elizabeth's choice of Espilus over Therion, therefore, implies a rejection not only of the oblique designs of this particular entertainment, expressed in music, but also of the ability of music itself to be expressive in such terms. Declining to give the reasons for what may have been a deliberately perverse choice on the part of Elizabeth, the description notes 'it pleased her Majesty to judge that Espilus did the better deserve her but what words, what reasons she used for it, this paper, which carrieth so base names, is not worthy to containe' (lines 282–284). Sidney's narrator is aware of what the Queen said, but uses a thin pretext of modesty to excuse himself from having to be beholden to her words. Her interpretation of the scenario differs from his own, and therefore cannot be admitted to the text. The report of this event minimises Elizabeth's response, creating the impression of favouring the validity of the esoteric mode of musical signification and thus highlighting the partiality of its own recording of the event.

Elizabeth's agency seems to have been more welcome in her response to the 'notable consort of six Musitions' who entertained her after dinner on the first day of her stay at Elvetham (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 580). The Queen showed her approval by renaming one of the Pavans that the group played: 'Their Musicke so highly pleased hir, that in grace and favour thereof, she gave a newe name unto one of their Pavans, made long since by maister *Thomas Morley*, then Organist of Pauls Church' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 580). By renaming the Pavan,

Elizabeth asserted her ownership of it and of the occasion itself. The fact that this is reported by the text, however, is contingent upon Elizabeth's conformity to the entertainment's objectives. It is noticeable that the name she bestowed is not recorded, whereas the genre, the quality of the music and the name of the prestigious musician associated with it are. Where the Queen's response reflects favourably on the host and the entertainment, it is preserved by the text, but where it does not contribute to, or even conflicts with the entertainment's portrayal of the host's personal quality, it is obscured as far as possible.

Despite being couched within nominal codes of deference, these gaps remind us that we must acknowledge whose perspective(s) are being recorded in these documents. Unfortunately, historical records do not tend to survive in a manner that always enables this kind of reading. A case in point is the curious letter describing the Kenilworth visit, attributed to Robert Langham, but the subject of much debate over its authorship and tone (Goldring 2008).⁶ Whatever the provenance of this document, it is a genuinely contemporary account of the visit, but one which may be satirical in parts and therefore must be used very cautiously.⁷

The letter's descriptions of the life of attendants and acolytes at court on progress portray stereotypical courtly scenes. For instance, the letter supplies a description of a private performance to a group of courtiers by a minstrel, creating a scene straight out of Castiglione or Boccaccio. Clearly, depending on one's understanding of the nature of the letter, this description is either meant to impress the reader with the narrator's access to a sophisticated milieu or to satirically emphasise his desire to impress in such a way. Either way, it portrays music and its appreciation as integral to the social life of a homogeneous courtly community.

The narrator's rather snobbish description of the minstrel's performance mocks the performer's uncouth behaviour by reporting that as he prepared to sing, he 'cleerd hiz vois with a hem and a reach, and spat out withall', and then 'wyped hiz lips with the hollo of hiz hand, for fyling hiz napkin' (Kuin 1983, 62–63). The minstrel did not, in the end, get his chance to perform for the Queen, it seems, but Langham concedes that had the matter 'cum to the sheaw, I think the fello wouold have handled it well inoogh', remarking that even this 'ridiculoous devise of an auncient minstrell' was justified at the visit because 'all endevoour waz too moove mirth and pastime' (Kuin 1983, 64, 59). The portion of the minstrel's song quoted by Langham is a passage from Malory which

portrays Arthur's 'Coourt riall' (Kuin 1983, 63). This literary echo obviously mirrors the idealised characteristics of the 'woorshipfull company' that the narrator considers himself part of (Kuin 1983, 59).

The explicit reference to a fictional court emphasises the literary nature of the notion of courtliness itself. The letter's metafictional self-awareness here suggests a complex relationship between event and text that is too tangled to be satisfactorily reduced to either history or fiction. Whether a hoax or not, the letter seems to have also been a vehicle for a discourse upon the nature of progress entertainments (as well as other issues, such as an extended concern with numerology). The letter clearly seeks to present a picture of 'the court', and, through its printing and circulation, made it available for a reading public which did not normally have access to that experience.⁸

This version of the court is a place where *both* reality and fiction echo each other.⁹ Literary tropes are played out by individuals seeking a role in this social context. Both Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures* and Langham's letter use reference to real places, persons and events to convey a different kind of truth in an effort to create an identifiable persona. What is left are echoes of those originating 'real' elements that pick out particular factors for emphasis. Whether the letter exposes Langham as a deluded exaggerator or the court as a place where this type of fool is praised, the music is understood as part of the type of self-portrayal and self-promotion that the entertainments and texts themselves participate in an echoic circuit of reflectiveness.

Music's instability of meaning, as we have seen, makes describing it an opportunity for directing, obfuscating or revising the import of the events being related. This is also a significant characteristic of the way dance is handled in these texts. Another quintessentially courtly pastime, dancing can safely be said to have taken place at most of the visits Elizabeth made. It features 'casually', along with incidental music, as a diversion which could serve to pass the time not occupied by planned spectacles or court business. For instance, Langham's letter reports that the first Sunday afternoon of the Kenilworth visit was spent 'in excellent Musik, of sundry sweet instruments, and in dauncing of Lords and Ladyez, and oother woorshipfull degreez' (Kuin 1983, 43).¹⁰

The dance was also a spectator activity. Later in the Kenilworth visit, 'a lyvely morisdauns' featured as entertainment for Elizabeth and the court as the audience.¹¹ The letter goes on to note that it was performed 'according to the auncient manner', with 'six daunserz, Mawdmarion,

and the fool' (Kuin 1983, 50), and mockingly highlights the diverse costumes of the motley crew marshalled to perform this dance before the Queen. Heaney highlights the 'cultural gap' that this exposes between the Kenilworth dancers and 'some categories of audience'. He interprets this as a factor which enabled the morris dance to represent a nostalgic vision of Englishness by distancing the audience from the spectacle being enacted (Heaney 1989, 101–102).

As we shall see more fully in Chap. 4, the echoic quality of codes of movement, as well as costume, serves to differentiate social class. Morris dancing probably originated in court revels in the late fifteenth century (Lowe 1957, 66; Hutton 1996, 264–266). By 1575, though, it was a decidedly popular form. To flatter its participants, dance needed to be urbane and fashionable, and to invoke the new. The morris dance at Kenilworth instead flatters its spectators, particularly in Langham's description. The locals are seen as crude, ineptly attempting to mimic the movements that denote social elevation and thus providing an unintentionally comic entertainment for the sophisticated courtly audience.¹² Countrified and 'auncient',¹³ the dance display at Kenilworth echoed outmoded styles, emphasising the spectators' social superiority by virtue of their knowledge of newer trends.

Yet again, the entertainment at Cowdray in 1591 used reversal to exploit this kind of expectation. On the day before her departure, the Queen was entertained by 'the countrie people' who 'presented themselves to hir Majestie in a pleasant daunce with Taber and Pipe. And the Lord *Montague* and his Lady among them, to the great pleasure of all the beholders, and gentle applause of hir Majestie' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 560). This was obviously no impromptu rendition of any old country dance,¹⁴ although the tabor and pipe described here are standard instrumentation, and as such was probably not so different from the display at Kenilworth sixteen years previously. The key, and intriguing, difference, though, is the participation of the Montagues. Participatory dance has very different connotations to display dance performed in front of a static audience (though they can overlap in some ways).¹⁵ Dance and music took centre stage at Cowdray as part of a carefully choreographed demonstration of the importance and social status of the host and his family in unity with the local inhabitants. The dance represented in miniature the self-portrayal of the host that the entirety of the visit sought to enact.

Breight sees the joining of Lord and Lady Montague in a dance with local commoners as symbolising the solidarity of a religious minority in a strongly Catholic area. He raises the possibility that the dance itself could have specifically signified Catholicism, either to its participants alone or to its audience, perhaps through an association of dance activity with traditional Catholic holidays (Breight 1989, 157, 165n; Questier 2006, 173–176). What is clear is that the text's choice to record this dance emphasises the embeddedness of the family in the local community. When viewed in these terms, this display forms an intriguing echo of an earlier display of country dance: an anti-Catholic propaganda exercise enacted on the estate of Edward Rookwood over a decade earlier in 1578 (Heale 2007, 190–191). A letter by Richard Topclyffe criticises Rookwood for his poor hospitality, before describing how an effigy of the Virgin Mary had been found by the agents of the crown, hidden in a hayloft on the estate. Then,

after a sort of cuntree daunces ended, in her Majesty's sighte the idoll was sett behinde the people, who avoyeded [...] Her Majesty commanded it to the fyer, which in her sight by the cuntrie folks was quickly done, to her content, and unspeakable joy of every one but some one or two who had sucked of the idoll's poysoned mylke. (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 773)

Again, dance seems particularly associated with popular culture and the common people, as well as having potential links to vaguely defined Catholic practices. Many unresolved questions about this account remain (Collinson 2007, 13; Hackett 1996). What is clear is that Rookwood suffered as a result of his recusancy, being summoned to account for his actions and imprisoned, according to Collinson. The role of dance here, like the later communal dance at Cowdray, seems to have been as a display of community, but one where solidarity was spectacularly broken in an attempt to reset local loyalties and persecute suspected Catholics. The dance can flatter and entertain courtly spectators and participants at the same time as it can flatter and assert the host, but Rookwood's unfortunate fate reminds us that barely audible beneath the textual bravura of courtly sprezzatura and pastoral gaiety were real threats to livelihoods and lives. The echoic patterns that the entertainment texts naturalise carefully direct our attention away from the possibilities and realities of failure.

ELVETHAM AND AMPLIFICATION

The Earl of Hertford, proprietor of the Elvetham estate and potential rival claimant to the English throne, was another host in a precarious position. His reception of Elizabeth at Elvetham attempts to compensate for this, as Breight (1992) argues, by going beyond the bounds of decorum in the provision of entertainment, in ways that often seem in direct competition with Kenilworth (26). The giant trumpeters at Kenilworth had shown that music's presence could help to represent visually and aurally the wealth that the host could afford to lavish on his/her guest. As Hulse (1992) points out, in addition to being practical tools for providing ceremonial and recreational music, musical instruments were also 'conspicuous examples of the patron's wealth, social status, and artistic taste' (115). In these terms, for the sheer amount of music, the Elvetham entertainment was by far the most extravagant, opening with songs and punctuated by music throughout. Price (1981) has charted the family's interest in music in the earlier sixteenth century, showing how Hertford's father, the Lord Protector Somerset, had invested in a large number of musical instruments, including, among other things, several lutes, hoboys and two sets of viols (122). These instruments cannot all have been for the use of Somerset himself and his immediate family and suggest a professional or semi-professional musical element in his household. Such musical resources helped to fill out the Earl's claims to lavish hospitality and included a designated group of musicians who were at Elizabeth's disposal during the visit, to play at any time she wished (the 'mixed consort' discussed below).

In addition to the physical presence of expensive equipment, the sounds these instruments made could indicate prestige through an awareness of musical trends and the employment of the latest styles. This is more difficult for us to judge from a historical distance. For example, Brennecke has pointed out that the welcome song at Elvetham discussed above is very similar to a lyric ('This sweet and merry month of May') from Thomas Watson's *The First Sett of Italian Madrigals Englished*, in two different musical settings by Byrd, one for six and one for four voices (Brennecke 1968, 39). The difficulty with this evidence is that the lyrics in the Elvetham text are in three stanzas of six lines each, whereas the lyrics for the musical settings are in one eight-line stanza. They are clearly related, however, by the similarity of the concluding couplets. The Elvetham text has 'O beauteous Queene of second Troy, | Accept of

our unfeined joy' (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 579), and the text from the musical settings has 'O beauteous Quene of second Troy, | Take well in worth, a simple toy' (Watson 1590, no. 8).

Since *The First Sett of Italian Madrigals Englished* was published in the year preceding the Elvetham entertainment, Byrd and Watson may have adapted the six-part version for use as the six-part welcome song at the entertainment. How such an altered version might have sounded is extremely difficult to reconstruct retrospectively, though (Brennecke 1968, 39). The song as we have it now is completely unsuitable for the lyrics given in the Elvetham text. For instance, the first line of music in 'This sweet and merry month of May' includes a quaver figure based around the repetition of 'merry', thus adding two syllables to the line.¹⁶ The lyrics in the Elvetham text are difficult to bend around this rhythm. Additionally, in the top four parts, the first two syllables are set apart with a beat's gap between the second and third syllables. This emphatic rhythm is quite appropriate for 'This sweet—and', but obviously unsuitable for setting 'With frag—rant', which are the first three syllables of the Elvetham lyrics. Nevertheless, although the specific song as sung at the entertainment is unrecoverable, we can surmise that the genre is most likely to be an English madrigal, and as such comes at an early moment in the development and popularity of this genre. Dart describes the two versions of 'This sweet and merry month of May' in Watson's (1590) collection as 'the first true English madrigals ever published' (Fellowes and Dart 1963, ii). Such early adoption is yet another marker of aurally figured prestige.

These songs by Byrd also link one of the sixteenth century's most prestigious composers to the Elvetham entertainment. Renowned today as one of the most skilful of English composers, Byrd had a similarly elevated reputation in his own day. A poem by John Baldwin dated 1591 praises Byrd at length as a composer of international quality and renown, 'Whose greater skill and knowledge dothe excelle all at this tyme | And far to strange countries abroade his skill dothe shyne' (Boyd 1962, 310–312). In addition to Byrd, Brennecke's investigation of the music for this entertainment has revealed the involvement of such musicians as Thomas Morley, Francis Pilkington and Edward Johnson (Brennecke 1968, 34–35). Clearly, no expense was spared in securing contributions from the elite of England's professional composers and musicians.

The Elvetham entertainment also employed the innovative instrumental configuration of the mixed (or 'broken') consort. The mixed

consort as a genre seems to have been developed by Edward Johnson at Hengrave in the 1560s.¹⁷ As Holman (1993) explains, prior to this point, musicians at the English court tended to be based in ensembles made up of instruments of the same family.¹⁸ The music of a consort, therefore, provided the opportunity not only to intrigue an audience with new and unusual combinations of sounds, but also to display the host's taste and awareness of fashionable and sophisticated new trends.

The mixed consort is specifically described in the Elvetham text, which carefully names the instruments used:

the *Fairy Queene* and hir maides danced about the Garden, singing a song of six partes, with the musicke of an exquisite consort; wherein was the Lute, Bandora, Base-violl, Cittern, Treble-viol, and Flute. (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 593)

This list constitutes the first instance where the instruments of this particular ensemble are precisely named,¹⁹ giving it a particular emphasis in the text, and a role in advertising the quality of the entertainment. But this occasion is unlikely to have been the first time that such a group had featured in a progress entertainment. Gascoigne's reference to 'a Consort of Musicke' (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 307) during the Lady of the Lake entertainment at Kenilworth in 1575 appears to be the earliest example of the use of the English word 'consort' in a musical sense.²⁰ Although the group is not enumerated in such detail in the Kenilworth texts, the presence of the mixed consort at Kenilworth in 1575 is accepted by music historians as one of the first, and certainly the most public, early manifestations of this distinctive grouping of instruments. Thus, the Elvetham entertainment did not innovate; rather, it extended and amplified previous iterations of forms and genres, in this case by listing precisely and fully the different instruments included in the ensemble.

The preciseness of the list in the Elvetham text is part of a pattern of specific competitiveness with the 1575 Kenilworth entertainment. For instance, where Kenilworth Castle had a pre-existing pond, Elvetham had an artificial lake created especially for the occasion, with water inhabitants performing songs, processions and acrobatics. As a much smaller estate than Kenilworth, Elvetham would not have been expected to host the same scale of event, but Hertford's lavish spending made up for the estate's size (Bright 1992, 26).²¹ Musical resources were one prominent

area in which the relative quality of the hospitality of the entertainment could be displayed, and one in which Hertford may have felt he had an advantage. The text, as we have seen, could press this advantage by reflecting and amplifying the echoes of previous entertainments to show how both music and the overall forms of the entertainments exceeded expectations.²²

The use of an echo device at Elvetham is another example of this amplified repetition. By turning it into an echo song, the Elvetham entertainment displayed the self-conscious artistry so evident in the echo dialogue at Kenilworth, but the use of music established a different register of fictionality. It dispensed with the pretence of a natural echo as the groups of performers were in full view, in daylight, situated in different vessels on the pond. The text describes how

three voices in the Pinnacle sung a song to the Lute with excellent divisions, and the end of every verse was replied by Lutes and voices in the other boate somewhat a farre off, as if they had beene Ecchoes. (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 584)

The text, therefore, with its qualifying ‘as if’, emphasises the theatrical nature of the performance. The players could have been concealed, but the point of this echo device was not to do with creating an illusion of the aural effect itself, but with declaring the host capable of creating such elaborate entertainment.

The fictive frame is supplied by Nereus’s introduction of the song as a gift from Thetis to please the Queen. The song, therefore, is direct in its praise of Elizabeth. Furthermore, it is presented with a special emphasis on its status as a specifically musical gift, when Nereus states ‘*White-footed Thetis sends her Musicke-maides, | To please Elisaes eares with harmonie*’ (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 584). Instead of the stress on clever ironies and paradox that was displayed at Kenilworth, the echo song at Elvetham accentuates its spectacularity and the pleasures of its musicality.

The song does still use the dialogic form of the Kenilworth echo exchange, but the dialogue takes place within the main verse itself, rather than between the verse and echo. The echo, instead of being the focus of interrogation, is a compositional device, forming a refrain of the last three to four syllables of the two-line responses. The music eliminates the need for even weak syntactic variation as the echoes here become merely emphatic. Ingenious lyrics are redundant as the echoic interest

is supplied by the melody and variation on the melody. Indeed, the text refers to the ‘excellent divisions’ of the lute in the pinnace, which describes the practice of the lute adding ornamental variations upon the basic melodic structure.²³

The positioning of the musicians at Elvetham is also significant. Within the main vessel sat three cornet players, along with ‘three excellent voices, to sing to one lute’. Elsewhere on the pond, ‘two other boats hard by’ contained ‘other lutes and voices to answey by maner of Eccho’ (Goldring et al. 2014, 3: 582). This clever use of spacing enhanced the impression of the echo by combining it with the aural technique of *cori spezzati*. This involved dividing a choir into different groups positioned at a distance from each other to heighten the antiphonal character of the music, a practice at the height of its popularity across Europe in the 1580s and 1590s (Reese 1954, 372–374; Arnold 1959, 6–12). Usually reserved for grand ceremonial religious occasions, such sophisticated musical techniques advertised the complex level of organisation and coordination that the host was capable of commanding, as well as his discerning taste. The echo song thus co-opts the musical vocabulary of the grand occasion to enhance the status of the Queen’s visit.

Unlike the entertainment at Bisham, which the following year would offer a straightforward repeat of Kenilworth’s use of the echo, the Elvetham entertainment reconfigured the echo device to suit its own purposes. The Elvetham echo song is an acknowledgement of its predecessor at Kenilworth, but it also invokes associations of sophisticated continental forms of entertainment and music-making. At Kenilworth, the audience was invited to admire the contrivance of a verbal device which advertises the possibility of double meanings. At Elvetham, a display of musical virtuosity sought to impress. Whereas Kenilworth projected a kind of knowing artlessness, the echo device at Elvetham was characterised by a self-conscious artfulness which aimed to set it apart from the earlier entertainment that it imitated.

The influence of Kenilworth as the progress entertainment par excellence is clear in the way that later entertainments adopted aspects of its artistic strategies. Richard Braithwait, fifty years later, saw the Kenilworth entertainments as the absolute height of Elizabethan hospitality, describing them as ‘the greatest state that ever I did hear of in an Earles house’ (quoted in Hazard 1987, 11). Later events creatively distort and shape the meanings made possible by precedent within newer particularities of

place and time. The progress entertainments share certain common factors in their provenance and a vocabulary of praise on which they draw, but each one is also shaped by idiosyncratic factors such as landscape, the host's status, the host's standing with the Queen and the availability of practical resources (both in terms of personnel such as actors, musicians and artificers and raw materials). In a variety of ways on different occasions, the aural qualities of these events were crucial in bringing to life the mythical world that the entertainment sought to establish. Music and sound drew the attention of auditors to statements being made as part of an entertainment's fictionalising strategies and alerted them to the need for interpretation of those fictions. Thus, music, sound and echoic patterning have a broader role in the intertextuality of meaning at the entertainments. Later courtly entertainments echo earlier ones—sometimes directly and sometimes with syntactical variation. These associations continue to reverberate through the other spaces and sounds encountered in this book, beyond progress entertainments to other forms of courtly and public performance.

NOTES

1. The 1577 version of this passage omitted the phrase 'and heare the complaints of hir poore commons injured by hir unjust officers or their substitutes'.
2. See, for example, payment records of payment to trumpeters during her visit to Lichfield in 1575 (Goldring et al. 2014, 2: 333). As Marsh (2010) notes, bells marked important national events. For instance, parishes across England continued to use them to mark the anniversary of Elizabeth's coronation throughout her reign (481).
3. On dumb shows more generally, see Mehl (1965), Lopez (2013) and Thomson (2016). These studies concentrate on the use of the technique in theatrical drama, however, to the exclusion of dumb shows performed in private venues. Thomson does address the potential importance of music in the theatrical dumb show (Thomson 2016, 29–30).
4. These two virgins were most likely played by the two daughters of the host, Lady Elizabeth Russell (Davidson and Stevenson 2007; Johnston 2002).
5. Kolkovich (2016) reads this entertainment as providing a vision of feminine courtiership as an alternative to an outmoded Petrarchanism.
6. For a more extended account of my own view, see Anderson (2008).

7. If Langham's letter is indeed a contemporary hoax, then the valuable insights it offers into court life and customs, the experience and reception of the entertainments by those present, and their understanding of magnificence and hospitality, become complicated, but not necessarily invalidated.
8. Goldring (2008) argues that Langham might reasonably have expected his correspondent (fellow mercer Humphrey Martin) to have shared the letter with others, but not that it would have been circulated through print reproduction (266–267).
9. See Chap. 4 for an extended discussion of this reciprocity in relation to court masques.
10. The timing of this merriment may have been controversial, however, in that it took place upon the Sabbath. The narrator comments that the morning had been 'occupied (az for the Sabot day) in quiet and vacation from woork, and in divine servis and preaching at the parish church' (43). The pious tone here is perhaps an attempt to offset the ungodly activities of the afternoon.
11. This display of dance also took place on a Sunday—the one following that described above. Langham presents it as part of festivities intended 'in woorschip of this Kenelwoorth Castl, and of God and saint Kenelm, whooz day forsooth by the calendar, this waz' (Kuin 1983, 49, 88–89n).
12. Stephen Greenblatt, among others, sees this as the inspiration for the rude mechanicals' theatricals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2004, 50).
13. Although antiquity and tradition could be positive signifiers, in this context, 'auncient' is not.
14. Presumably, the participants had been carefully selected and coached.
15. Participatory dance becomes the sine qua non of the Jacobean court masque and will be discussed in Chap. 4.
16. This kind of repetition is typical of the polyphonic madrigal style, making it a genre that naturally seems aligned with echo.
17. Holman (1993) suggests that the loan of this musician to Robert Dudley may have enabled this new form to be heard at the 1575 entertainment (133).
18. This practice survives in an ensemble like the string quartet, which is made up of different-sized versions of essentially the same instrument. By contrast, other modern chamber ensembles mix instruments which produce sound very differently—e.g. a piano trio. Holman (1993) compares the approaches using a culinary metaphor, describing 'the instrumental sets or families as alternatives on a musical menu' in contrast to mixing instrument types as if they were 'ingredients in a single dish' (131).

19. The same configuration of instruments as noted at Elvetham was specified in Thomas Morley's *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599). This publication, coming as it did nearly 25 years after the first textual reference to a 'consort', was the first printed book specifically for this group.
20. Gascoigne's 1575 usage predates the earliest examples cited in *OED* by over a decade. The term 'consort' on its own without any prefix seems to have implied a group comprised of different types of instruments (Boyden 1957, 228–229; Edwards 2001).
21. Hertford's additions to the estate are also carefully listed in the text, and included, among other things, a spicery, an extra larder, several extra kitchens and a new wine cellar.
22. Bright (1992) sees this as a deliberate violation of decorum (26).
23. This could have been throughout the song as well as in the echoed lines.

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2018, XI, 123 p. 7 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-67969-3